

WHAT IS CLAIMED

1. A method for providing a service for travelers to acquire items at the traveler's destination comprising the steps of:

receiving a request from a traveler for obtaining at least one item at a location indicative of a destination location of the traveler, the request including travel data comprising the traveler's time of arrival and destination, and item data comprising data indicative of items being requested;

arranging for the at least one item to be supplied;

arranging for the at least one supplied item to be delivered to the location indicated by the traveler's destination at a time indicated by the traveler's arrival time; and

conducting a transaction with the traveler for the traveler to obtain the at least one item.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of arranging for the at least one item to be supplied further comprises for each of the at least one requested items the steps of:

accessing a collection of at least one supplier of the requested items, each supplier of the collection of at least one supplier having a location and having a collection of at least one item available for being obtained by the traveler;

selecting a supplier from the collection of the at least one supplier in accordance with availability of the item and the location of the supplier relative to the destination of the traveler; and

arranging for the selected supplier to supply the item.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the step of arranging for the at least one item to be delivered further comprises, for each of the at least one requested item, the steps of:

accessing a collection of at least one shipper, each shipper of the collection of at least one shipper designating a selection of at least one possible source location from where to ship an item and a selection of at least one possible target destination for where to ship an item;

selecting at least one shipper from the collection of shippers designating, as one of individually and in combination, the location of the selected supplier supplying the item as a possible source location and the location indicative of the destination of the traveler as a possible target destination; and

arranging for the at least one selected shipper to ship the item from the supplier to the destination indicative of the destination of the traveler.

4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the step of conducting a transaction with the traveler further comprises:

for each item of the at least one item transacting with the selected supplier to supply the item;

for each item of the at least one item transacting with the at least one selected shipper to ship the item; and

transacting with the traveler based on results of the transactions transacted with each of the selected suppliers and each of the at least one selected shippers.

5. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
registering each unregistered traveler making a request by accepting and storing personal data and preference data about the traveler;

storing the request as history data;

accessing the personal data, preference data and history data including previously stored requests of the traveler; and

providing suggestion data to the traveler based on the accessed personal data, preference data and history data of the traveler, the suggestion data providing suggestions for requesting items.

6. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
accessing a data collection storing data about at least one geographic location;

retrieving data about the destination location of the traveler from the data collection about geographic locations; and

providing suggestion data to the traveler based on the retrieved data about the destination location of the traveler, the suggestion data providing suggestions for requesting items.

7. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
 identifying the traveler as being sight impaired;
 receiving a labeling request for at least one item from the traveler; and
 at least one of the steps of arranging for the at least one item to be supplied
 and arranging for the at least one item to be shipped further comprising arranging for
 labeling of the at least one item in accordance with the labeling requests.

8. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
 identifying the traveler as sight impaired;
 receiving a packing request for at least one item from the traveler; and
 at least one of the steps of arranging for the at least one item to be
 supplied, and arranging for the at least one item to be shipped further comprising
 arranging for packing of the at least one item in accordance with the packing request.

9. The method according to claim 1, wherein the item data includes one or
 more of: at least one image and a description of at least one of the at least one item being
 requested.

10. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of arranging for the at
 least one item to be supplied further comprises, for each of the at least one items being
 requested, providing an item to be supplied that matches the item data.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein the step of providing an item to be supplied that matches the item data is interactive for allowing the traveler to determine if the item being supplied matches, and for allowing the traveler to suggest matching items.

12. A system for providing a service to travelers to request and acquire items at a traveler's destination comprising: a virtual luggage server in communication with a computer terminal operated by a traveler, for

receiving a request for obtaining at least one item at a location indicative of a destination from the traveler, the request including travel data comprising the traveler's time of arrival and destination, and item data comprising data indicative of the item being requested; and for arranging for the at least one requested item to be supplied and delivered to a location indicated by the traveler's destination location at a time indicated by the traveler's arrival time;

wherein the virtual luggage server communicates with the traveler at the computer terminal to conduct a transaction with the traveler for the traveler to obtain the at least one item at the location indicated by the traveler's destination location.

13. The system according to claim 12, wherein the system further comprises a central supplier server in communication with at least one supplier for selecting a supplier in accordance with availability of the item and a location of the supplier relative to the destination of the traveler; and

arranging for the selected supplier to supply the item.

14. The system according to claim 13, wherein the system further comprises a central shipping server in communication with at least one shipper for selecting a shipper in accordance with an ability for the shipper to ship from the location of the supplier to the location indicated by the destination of the traveler.

15. The system according to claim 12, wherein the virtual luggage server accesses at least one of the following databases:

a traveler database for storing data associated with at least one traveler comprising at least one of name data, billing data, shipping data, personal data, preference data, and history data regarding previous travel and items previously obtained through the system for travelers;

an item database storing data associated with at least one item available to be obtained by travelers using the system;

a hotel database storing data associated with at least one hotel participating in the service for travelers;

a supplier database storing data associated with at least one supplier supplying the available items; and

a location database storing data on at least one location that is a possible destination location.

16. The system according to claim 15, further including a central hotel server in communication with the virtual luggage server for coordinating shipping of the at least one item to a hotel from the at least one participating hotel selected by the traveler.

17. The system according to claim 12, wherein the virtual luggage server communicates with the traveler via one of the Internet, telephone, facsimile, and electronic mail.

18. The system according to claim 15, wherein the virtual luggage server further comprises a suggestion server for consulting at least one of the traveler database to access data associated with the traveler including at least one of personal data, preference data and history data; the item database; and the location database to provide suggestions to the traveler for suggesting items to be requested items.

19. The system according to claim 12, wherein the traveler exchanges information with the virtual luggage server by exchanging images, and wherein the system further comprises a visually impaired server in communication with the virtual luggage server for providing at least one of: a description of images exchanged between the traveler and the virtual luggage server; a means for the traveler to provide instructions for labeling items; and a means for the traveler to provide instructions for packing the items.

20. A method for providing a service for a traveler to acquire at least one item at the traveler's destination comprising the steps of:

- receiving a request from a traveler for obtaining at least one item;
- providing the traveler with the option to one of rent and purchase the at least one item;
- arranging for the at least one item to be supplied;
- arranging for delivery of the at least one item to a location selected by the traveler at a time selected by the traveler; and
- conducting a transaction with the traveler for the traveler to obtain the at least one item.

21. The method according to claim 20, wherein the step of conducting a transaction further includes one of providing the traveler with the option to one of purchase the at least one item and rent the at least one item.

22. The method according to claim 20, further comprising the step of:
arranging for delivery of the at least one item to a location selected by the traveler at a time selected by the traveler after the traveler obtains the at least one item.

23. The method according to claim 20, wherein the at least one item is one of an article of apparel, an article of equipment, a toiletry article and a medicine.

24. The method according to claim 20, wherein the location selected by the traveler is one of a hotel, an airport, and a cruise ship.

25. The method according to claim 22, further comprising the step of arranging for the return of at least one item of each at least one of them that is rented by the traveler.

Approved for Release by NSA on 09-11-2013 pursuant to E.O. 13526